

*Ute delegation of 1905 for the final negotiations on opening the Uintah and Ouray Reservation. Front: Appah, Arrive; center: Red Cap, David Copperfield, Charlie Shavanaux, Wee-che; rear: Wallace Stark, Charley Mack, John Duncan, Suckive, unknown, Boco White, unknown. Courtesy Smithsonian Institution.*

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## *The Reluctant Suzerainty: The Uintah and Ouray Reservation*

BY FLOYD A. O'NEIL

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THE EARLY HISTORY of the Ute Indians — their relations with the Spaniards of New Mexico and with the American trappers — has attracted a number of historians. Even more scholars have explored the conflict that developed after the Mormons settled along the western borders of the Ute domain. It is the author's intention to deal briefly with those areas of Ute history which are already covered in printed works and then to concentrate on some aspects which are less well known.

The arrival of white settlers was not particularly disturbing to Utah's Indians since the Great Salt Lake was a border area between the Utes and the Shoshoni bands which ranged over the Great Basin west of there. As the Mormons moved south, however, taking up new lands, the Indians were crowded off their central settlements, in Utah Valley and elsewhere. This southern thrust prompted Ute resistance— first at Battle Creek in 1850 — and then the so-called "Walker War" of 1853-54.

Brigham Young, ex-officio Commissioner of Indian Affairs, attempted to solve the problem of the dispossessed natives by creating farms where they might be trained to be self-sufficient by white standards. The attempt failed and the people of the Territory of Utah moved to have the Indians expelled from their native areas as the only realistic solution. The first step in removal was taken during the Civil War when President Abraham Lincoln designated the Uintah Basin as an Indian reservation. The Mormons had already explored the area and deemed it undesirable as a place for their settlements.

Superintendent of Indian Affairs O. H. Irish and Brigham Young attempted to work out a plan calling for the resettlement of the Utes in the Uintah Valley, and the Spanish Fork Treaty of 1865 was negotiated for that purpose. Congress did not ratify this treaty but it did approve the formation of the Uintah Valley Reservation. When the Utes learned this they were indignant. As federal officials began rounding them up, the reluctant natives quite naturally opposed dispossession. Their resistance to removal is called the Black Hawk War, 1865-69. This was begun after the government instructed the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Utah to "... prepare and submit a plan for removing the Indians from their old reservations to the Uintah Valley."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. O'Neil is assistant director, Center for Studies of the American West, University of Utah.

<sup>1</sup> U.S., Congress, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 38th Cong., 2d sess., 5 December 1864, serial 1220, p. 161.

In his letter of September 26, 1864, Superintendent O. H. Irish foreshadowed coming events:

Those Indians inhabiting that portion of the territory south of Great Salt Lake City, are all anxious to know whether the government proposes to enter into treaties with them. They are anxious to understand their rights; they look with alarm upon the constant and increasing stream of emigration pouring into this territory.

They behold the enterprise of the white man manifesting itself by taking possession of what they had long occupied and claimed as their country. They see farms opened and cultivated on every hand; they witness the establishment and rapid development of mining interests with apprehension and jealousy, and they threaten to stop all prospecting, and have done so in some portions of the territory, and unless some negotiations are opened and treaties formed, there will be difficulty with these Indians.

I have promised to lay the matter before the Great Father and they wait his action impatiently. Under the circumstances, I feel that I cannot too strongly urge this matter upon your attention.<sup>2</sup>

It became obvious that Irish failed to gain the attention necessary to avert hostilities because his successor, F. H. Head, in the next report dated September 20, 1866, wrote:

A small number of outlaws under the command of a chief named Black Hawk, have been engaged in hostilities for nearly two years. Their number did not at first exceed fifty men. And in the various skirmishes which have taken place, nearly that number have been killed, but accessions have been continually had from among the more reckless Indians of the different bands, so that their number has increased to about sixty men. They have made raids upon several of the small and defenseless settlements in the southern portion of the territory for the purpose of stealing cattle and horses, fighting when pursued by the settlers, who sought to recover such raids upon the settlements of Salina and Round Valley, stealing in each instance nearly two hundred cattle and horses.<sup>3</sup>

The war was costly. Bancroft wrote that "more than fifty of the Mormon settlers were massacred, and an immense quantity of livestock captured, and so widespread was the alarm that many of the southern settlements were for the time abandoned, the loss to the community exceeding \$1,000,000."<sup>4</sup> The war dragged on until the Indians were forced into defeat by the superior power of the territorial militia. Under the leadership of Chief Tabby, who favored peace, the reluctant natives were removed to the Uintah Valley. Black Hawk died and the warring

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 September 1864, p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> U.S., Congress, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 39th Cong., 2d sess., 20 September 1866, serial 1284, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah* (1889; reprint ed., Salt Lake City, 1964) 632-33.

Utes were in no condition to resist further. These early struggles are well-known chapters in Utah's history. Less has been written of the years of anguish that followed.

Pardon Dodds, was the first agent of the Uintah Valley Agency, but George W. Graffam, who replaced him, filed the first annual report. In that report he says: ". . . there are on the reservation, as near as I am able to ascertain, of all ages and sexes fifteen hundred Ute Indians; some of them quite industrious and intelligent, but sadly in want of education and moral teaching."<sup>5</sup> Graffam disliked his charges, his location, and his job. He was obviously not the man for the job and his report was characterized by his successor, J.J. Critchlow, as anything but accurate. It was, he said, "perfectly insipid."<sup>6</sup>

Critchlow was of a different stamp. His first reactions upon arriving at his new post have been preserved:

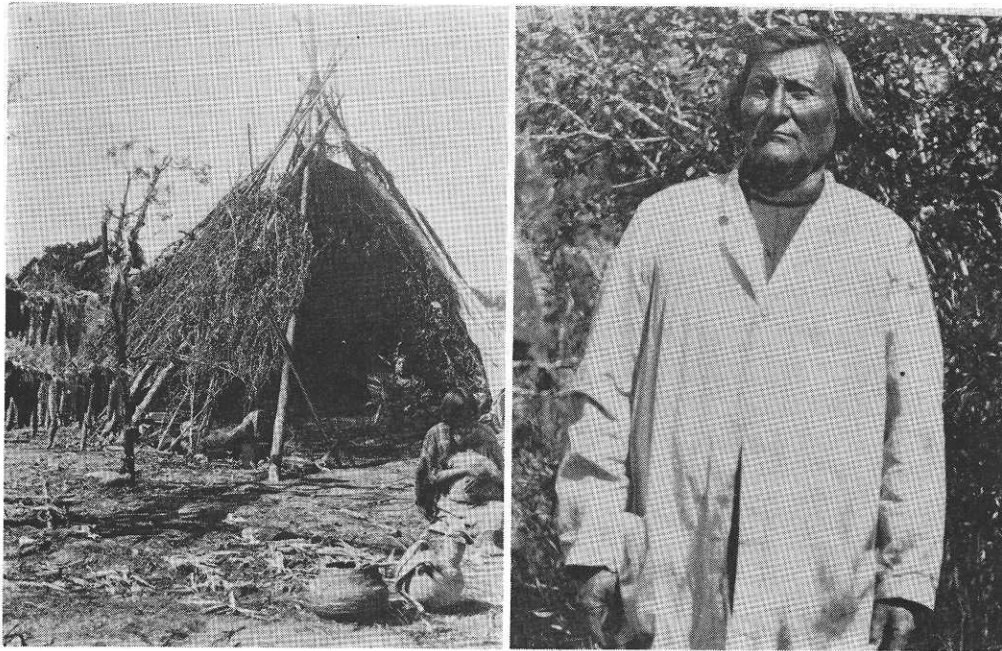
My first impressions of the agency were anything but favorable, and I am free to state that had I had an adequate conception of its position and condition, I should not have accepted it; but, having accepted and being here, I immediately commenced a survey, in order to ascertain, if possible, what was best to be done. I found the employees, some of them utterly depraved and worthless, the Indians completely discouraged, having almost come to the conclusion that the agency was about to be abandoned, the latter roaming about discontented and hungry, having access to every place except the commissary, in which there was little, except flour, worth keeping from them. All were on short rations of everything except flour and potatoes, and with a very remote prospect of a new supply. I found comparatively few Indians here, most of them being out on hunting expeditions to procure something on which to subsist. The Chief, Tabby-To-Kwana, and several influential Indians were present, with whom I held a council, at which I laid before them, using one of the Indians and an employee as Interpreters, the benevolent plans and purposes of the government relative to their care and support, telling them that "Washington" designed to treat them kindly and liberally, but that he could not always get good men to carry out his plans; that I desired to do as the Great Father told me; that I did not want to promise them much, as they knew promises were not always kept; that they must wait and see whether I was a good "monch" or not. They seemed to be well pleased and disposed to give me a fair trial.<sup>7</sup>

The new agent moved with energy and foresight to serve the needs of his charges. Many of his early efforts met indifferent success. He had to face problems like this:

<sup>5</sup> U.S., Congress, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 41st Cong., 2d sess., 15 September 1869, serial 1414, p. 675.

<sup>6</sup> U.S., Congress, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 42d Cong., 2d sess, 22 September 1871, serial 1505, p. 962.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 961.



*Uintah Chief Ta-vah-puts, right, and his home: Note two rows of corn drying in sun at far left. Courtesy National Archives.*

Douglas, the White River Chief, with quite a number of his band, came to the agency and succeeded in persuading our Indians who has up to that time intended to farm, to give it up and let the white man farm for the Indians, telling them that Washington did not intend that they should work, also ridiculing those that farmed, calling them squaws, and finally succeeded, toward the latter part of April, inducing our Indians to leave with him for a visit and council at some point south.<sup>8</sup>

Trouble of another kind came in 1876 when the Utes became alarmed over the surveying party which was sent to work out the reservation boundaries. Their suspicions were further inflamed when they heard that the Uintah Reservation was to be opened to white settlement. Critchlow managed to assure the Indians that once the survey was made the enclosed lands would be used for their exclusive benefit.

Later, the agent reported additional rumors that the reservation was to be thrown open to white settlers and the Indians again removed. He wrote:

We all for a time believed these reports. Any one can imagine the utter astonishment of both Indians and whites, especially as these reports

<sup>8</sup> U.S., Congress, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 42d Cong., 3d sess., 1 September 1872, serial 1560, p. 676.



followed so quickly after the assurance given in the matter of survey. The Indians seemed for a time almost stupefied, and old men who had maintained an unshaken confidence in Washington seemed to doubt whether they had a great father or not. One, a good Indian, notwithstanding what some reckless white men say that all such are dead, actually shed tears. I tried to reassure them, fearing the effect upon their general conduct, and especially on their farming operations. I told them I would go to Salt Lake and find out all about it. I partially succeeded, though I must say I felt degraded before my Indians, and that the government, if these reports were true, was justly chargeable with bad faith toward its dependent wards. I could not have much blamed them had they become perfectly reckless.<sup>9</sup>

How many such letters from responsible agents in the field fill the Indian service records now in the National Archives? We may imagine the agent's feeling when he was asked to furnish Indian troops to help suppress the Sioux who had destroyed Custer's command on the Little Big Horn.

The year 1879 was a crucial one in Ute history. In Colorado the White River Agency band of Utes (Yamparicas) rose in rebellion and killed Agent Nathan Meeker and some of his staff. Major T. T. Thornburgh was sent to punish the hostiles but was killed and his command nearly wiped out. A relief column brought the outbreak under control. Chief Ouray of the Uncompahgre Utes also intervened to stop the struggle.

The Meeker affair brought profound changes to the Uintah Reservation. As punishment the White River Utes were transferred to the Uintah Valley Reservation. The Uncompahgre Utes, innocent of any violence against the whites in Colorado, were transferred into Utah on an adjacent piece of territory.

The increased Indian population required the opening of roads. One was built from Fort Bridger and another route was surveyed linking Park City with the reservation. Still another road through Soldier and Nine Mile canyons was opened from Price, Utah, when the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad began operations in early 1883.

To manage the Uncompahgres from Colorado a second agency was soon established at Ouray, and a military post, Fort Thornburgh, was founded there in 1881. Trading posts were opened at both agencies. By the early 1880s Critchlow could boast, "it is exceedingly gratifying to all friends of these Indians, that notwithstanding the outrages committed

<sup>9</sup> U.S., Congress, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 44th Cong., 2d sess., 1 September 1876, serial 1749, p. 533.

by the White River Utes, with whom ours are most intimately connected, and the protracted troubles and unrest succeeding them, our Indians with a few exceptions, after the first excitement, remained in a state of almost perfect peace and quiet and were more than ordinarily kind and easily controlled."<sup>10</sup>

But the settlement of so many Indians on the Uintah Valley Reservation caused serious frictions between the White River Utes and the Uintah Utes from central Utah. Critchlow reported that the White Rivers were "indolent and know nothing of farming or caring for themselves by civilized pursuits, and what is worse, many of them have no desire to learn . . . they laugh at the Uintahs for farming, and say they ought to fight and then Washington would furnish them plenty to eat."<sup>11</sup> Later he wrote that "The last year has been one of peculiar anxiety to both the Indians and the agent. . . . there was a continual state of unrest, dissatisfaction and friction."<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless the agent concluded his annual report with a hopeful outlook: "The White River Utes, who appeared hostile and stubborn at first, have gradually come in, and I think will gradually settle down and engage in civilizing pursuits."<sup>13</sup>

From the Ouray Agency, Agent J. F. Minniss in his first report said that the Tabeguache Band (Uncompahgre) were "orderly, quiet and peacefully disposed with a disposition to their welfare."<sup>14</sup> Minniss added that agriculture would have to depend on irrigation but this appeared to be all but impossible as water from the two major streams, the Green and White rivers could not be diverted to the land. The land itself, as one agent reported, was:

. . . extremely rugged and fearfully riven, being pinnacled with mountains, crags, and cliffs and torn with canons, arroyos, and ravines. . . . a wild and ragged desolation, valuable for nothing unless it shall be found to contain mineral deposits.<sup>15</sup>

Conditions among the Uncompahgres seemed hopeless. In their reports the agents continually repeated that the land would not support their charges; they complained that the Indians were suffering from

<sup>10</sup> U.S., Congress, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 46th Cong., 2d sess., 31 August 1880, serial 1959, p. 272.

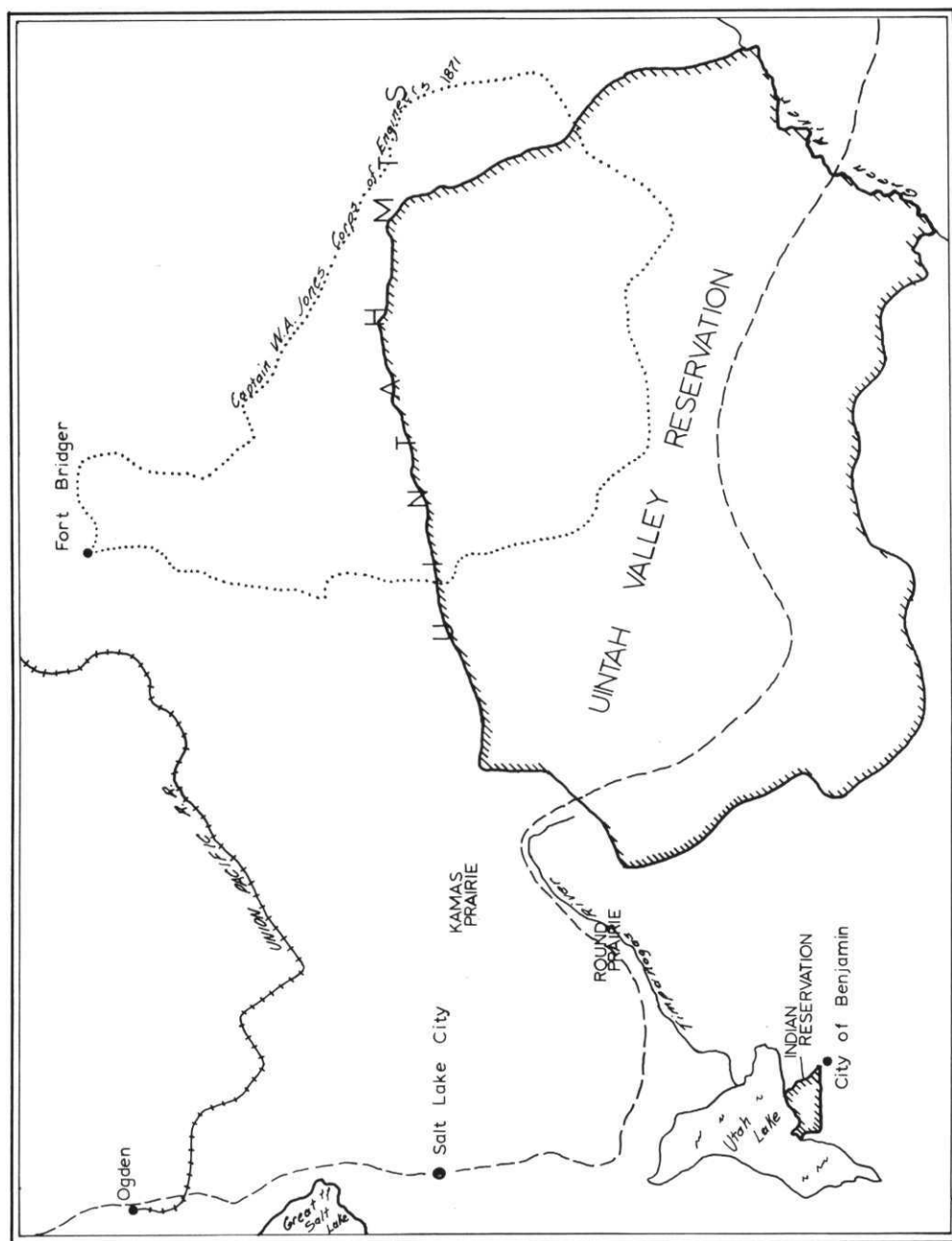
<sup>11</sup> U.S., Congress, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 47th Cong., 1st sess., 18 August 1881, serial 2018, p. 215.

<sup>12</sup> U.S., Congress, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 47th Cong., 2d sess., 1 September 1882, serial 2100, p. 209.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>15</sup> U.S., Congress, House, *House Report No. 3305*, 51st Cong., 2d sess., 2 February 1890, serial 2885, p. 4.



*A section of an 1873 manuscript map from the National Archives, redrawn by Robert Morgan, shows the Spanish Fork Indian Reservation, Fort Bridger, Uintah Valley Reservation, major routes of travel and other items of interest. A rich supply of primary materials in the National Archives and elsewhere awaits use by researchers of American Indian history.*



poverty and boredom and some of the Indians returned to their old homelands to hunt game and gather berries. In 1887, Colorow of the White River band led a small group into northwestern Colorado, on such an expedition. He was accused of illegally poaching game and was attacked by the ranchers of Colorado. The militia was called out and several of the Utes were killed, including one boy of tender years. Although the Utes were to range back into Colorado from time to time, the soldiers at Fort Duchesne usually kept them well in check.

In 1886, Fort Duchesne had been established and all three bands of Utes were consolidated under one agency located at that place. By then encroaching white settlers had become an acute threat to the harried Utes. Ashley Valley had been settled by a Mormon group in 1878, and by 1890 virtually all of the good agricultural land there had been taken up under the terms of the Homestead Act. The residents naturally turned their attention to the neighboring lands of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation.

Pressures on the Ute lands mounted. The location of the Uintah Agency at Fort Duchesne meant that the western border of the reservation was distant. The settlers of Heber Valley were already illegally using that area for grazing before the tribal leaders and agents finally obtained permission from the Secretary of the Interior to lease these lands to the whites. The discovery of gilsonite (a hydrocarbon mineral) on the Uncompahgre Reservation occurred at about the same time as the Indian people had occupied that area. Mining companies applied intense pressure to get Congress to give that land over to mining — an effort in which they were ultimately successful.

By 1887, when the Dawes Severalty Act was passed, the newspapers of Utah were asking that the Utes be allotted in severalty, and the rest of their lands opened to settlement.

Matters grew worse. Throughout their tenure on the reservation, the Utes had heard continual talk of the movement to open their lands to white settlement. By the late 1890s however, action supplanted words and federal, state, and local officials initiated the opening process. On June 7, 1897, Congress passed an act which provided for a survey of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in preparation for its opening. The Indians were to be allotted lands in severalty and the remainder of the reservation was to revert to the public domain.

As a rush of settlers came to the reservation in 1898, the Indians became angry, for the survey was not completed, nor were the Indians'

titles extinguished until such a survey was complete. The incident nearly led to violence; but the allotting commission mollified the angry Utes by hastily issuing lands to them.<sup>16</sup> The Uncompahgres were badly victimized.

As the policy for opening the reservation was being developed the government directed the U.S. Geological Survey to determine the amount of land and water available for farms and to study prospects for developing an irrigation system. An expert hydrographer, Cyrus Cates Babb was assigned to make the study. His work was begun in 1899 and completed in 1902. Babb seems to have been a careful and accurate observer. He suggested to his superiors that care should be taken to protect the rights of the Indians. In reporting to the commissioner, his superior F. H. Newell observed:

At present, and for many years in the future, the supply of water on the reservation is enormously in excess of the users, but in view of the future needs of the lands which may be allotted to the Indians, there is not much water which can be appropriated without injury to these prospective wants.<sup>17</sup>

In the meantime Utah's congressional delegation worked feverishly to have the reservation opened. This effort, initiated before Utah became a state, gained more strength after statehood was achieved. The opening which had been scheduled for 1902 had to be delayed because the surveys were not complete and because the Ute people were adamant in their opposition to the opening of the area they considered to be theirs. Finally in 1902, the entire vexed matter was aired in a Senate hearing, which produced some unusual results.

George Sutherland, a representative from Utah, and later associate justice of the Supreme Court, appeared to speak with convincing effect against the interests of the Utes. His contentions were many, but among the most telling were, first, that the first treaty made with the Utes by James Calhoun in 1849 did not apply to all Utes; second, that the reservation was set aside by an executive order with congressional approval and could be undone by the same method without the approval of the Indians; third, that the Uintah Valley Reservation was set aside for "the Indians in Utah"<sup>18</sup> and belonged no more to the Uintahs than to any

<sup>16</sup> Thomas G. Alexander and Leonard J. Arrington, "The Utah Military Frontier, 1872-1912, Forts Cameron, Thornburgh, and Duchesne," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 32 (Fall, 1964), 351.

<sup>17</sup> U.S., Congress, House, *House Document No. 671*, 57th Cong., 1st sess., 16 April 1902, serial 4377, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> U.S., Congress, Senate, *Senate Document No. 212*, 57th Cong., 1st sess., 4 February 1902, serial 4234, p. 112.

other Indians of the state including Navajo and Shoshoni; fourth, that the federal government had the power to restore reservations to the public domain without Indian consent following the precedent in the case of the cancelled lands in Utah at Corn Creek, San Pete, the Indian farm at Spanish Fork, and the Deep Creek Reservation.<sup>19</sup>

As a result of the hearings, Congress moved ahead to dispossess the Utes. Each Indian received his plot of ground. Limited timber and coal lands were reserved for the use of the three bands. And the residue of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation was thrown open to white settlement.

In late April 1903, United States Indian Inspector James McLaughlin was ordered to the Uintah Reservation to push negotiations with the White River and Uintah Utes for the opening of their lands. McLaughlin arrived at the agency at Whiterocks, May 13, 1903, and ordered the police to call the Indians into council on May 18. There he "explained minutely"<sup>20</sup> what Congress had in mind for them. The council lasted six days, during which time the inspector explained the features of the act to the stunned Utes. In exasperation McLaughlin wrote on May 30:

Wanrodes alone, of all the Indians who spoke in council, discussed the question intelligently. The other speakers made little or no reference to the question of accepting allotments under the law, their speeches being chiefly in opposition to opening the reservation, contending that their reservation could not be opened to settlement without their consent; that such was well known by everybody and had repeatedly been told the Indians by government officials; and some of the speakers, who have been

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-20.

<sup>20</sup> U.S., Congress, House, *House Document No. 33*, 58th Cong., 1st sess., 30 May 1903, serial 4565, p. 3.

*Fort Dushesne, ca. 1890, with rock cairns marking entrance. Courtesy National Archives.*



members of delegations visiting Washington, stated that they were thus advised by officials of the Department during their visit to Washington.<sup>21</sup>

McLaughlin attempted to convince them that the reservation would be opened with or without their permission but was unsuccessful. As the long council wore on the firmness of Indian resolve not to approve became manifest. McLaughlin wrote that he could have obtained the consent of the Uintahs, but that the White Rivers, led by Tim Johnson, were not only opposed but were intimidating the others.<sup>22</sup> This may have been the case, but all of the Utes were extremely reluctant to give up more of their land base. A tradition exists that the government attempted bribing and even counted the votes of children! In spite of McLaughlin's failure, the federal officials pressed on with the opening. The resistance of the Indians, the slow moving bureaucracy, the remoteness of the area, and the difficulty in dealing with the several bands delayed the opening until August 1905, when final action was set in motion. In the proclamations of that date, Roosevelt set aside 1,010,000 acres of the reservation as a forest reserve, 2,100 acres as townsite, 1,004,285 acres opened to homestead entry, 2,140 acres in mining claims, and 60,160 acres under reclamations; the residue, 282,460 acres, as unallotted tribal lands.<sup>23</sup>

The proclamations sparked a new land rush. Several hundred people located farms on the newly opened lands. The government had many more applicants for the good land than could be filled, therefore, marginal and sub-marginal farms were taken up, many of which were abandoned subsequently.

The new settlers were almost immediately in trouble. By 1912 enough of them were so poverty stricken they went to Senator Reed Smoot asking for an act of Congress to place a moratorium on land payment. A special law was required for this. The senator was hard pressed in pleading their case but was finally able to persuade Congress of the poverty of his constituents and the necessity of extending their time.<sup>24</sup>

As the process of allotment proceeded, the resistance of the Indian was predictable. The anger of the White River Utes was bitter. Some of the allottees were later to claim that while "first choice" was to

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> U.S., Congress, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 59th Cong., 1st sess., 1905-06, serial 4959, p. 501.

<sup>24</sup> U.S., Congress, House, *House Report No. 943*, 62d Cong., 2d sess., 1911-12, serial 6133, p. 2.

be theirs to the land, officials allotted them side-hills and cobble-stoned areas, while the good lands were opened to white homesteaders. The frustrations of all the Indians were many. Within a few years they had been reduced from a relatively free life to captivity. They were assigned to a small farm and told to adopt the methods of the whites. The prospect of farming a small plot of ground was repugnant. Suckive expressed the opinion of many when he said he would not "live like a pig in a pen."<sup>25</sup>

Several hundred Sioux had visited the Uintah Reservation in the 1880s and had brought expressions of friendship. The Utes, remembering them, felt that perhaps a liason with these Plains Indians might be used to bring force against the federal government. In 1906, under Red Cap's leadership nearly 400 of the Utes journeyed to South Dakota, while the U.S. Army harrassed and escorted them. Officials of the federal government and the various states fumed. But the Utes made it to South Dakota. Their alliance with the Sioux failed. After two years of dislocation, and poverty, the wandering Utes returned to Utah no better off than when they left. The only reason they refrained from fighting was the lack of any hope of success.<sup>26</sup>

Following this debacle, officials in the Bureau of Indian Affairs made fumbling attempts to meet the desires of the Indian people. This was probably prompted by pressure from Washington, D.C., as the South Dakota adventure had drawn heavily upon the federal treasury.

Meanwhile a new mood of resignation settled on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation. Only four years after the return of the people from South Dakota, the army removed its forces from Fort Duchesne. By that year, 1912, the region's growing white population held undisputed control. Although relations between the two races appeared quiet on the surface, numerous tensions continued to exist. Indians schools made but modest progress. Bigotry and notions of white superiority were as obvious as ever. Conflicts over land and water interests were frequent. By 1912 the Utes had been reduced to a narrow reservation situation comparable to that of many another Indian tribe.

The American Indians have suffered at the hands of the federal government. White populations have generally felt that the Indians were undesirables; the stereotyped solution for erasing the "undesirable" ele-

<sup>25</sup> Henry Harris, Jr., 1967 Interview, Duke Oral Indian History Collection, University of Utah.

<sup>26</sup> Floyd A. O'Neil, "An Anguished Odyssey: The Flight of the Utes, 1906-08," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 36 (Fall, 1968), 315-27.





*Chief Ouray, seated center, with his sub-chiefs: Warets, Shavano, Ankatosh and Guero. Photographed by William Henry Jackson while on a peace mission to Washington, D.C.*

ments was to make farmers and independent men of them, thus breaking up the tribal customs which were considered alien to "civilized" ways.

But many Indians could not and would not conform. They resented captivity. The Utes hated farming and they thought it an undignified pursuit. The lands they held were poor. The reservation was remote from any market so that even leasing the lands was not productive. But the government persisted in making farmers of its charges. Often the trust funds of the Indian people were used to build canals which served the non-Indians far better than those for whom they were intended.



Like other Indians, the Utes had little contact with local government except for law enforcement or, in the case of general violence, state militias. Theirs was a dialogue between the Great White Father in Washington, D.C., rather than a dialogue with the people around them. This connection with Washington was at times inconvenient. The superintendent represented Uncle Sam on each of the agencies; consequently much depended on one personality. This in one way made the representative of the government uniquely available, but on major decisions it required a delegation to make the long trip to Washington. Once they were removed from their people and placed under the strange and overpowering environment of the east coast, most western Indians could be easily manipulated. The majesty of government was used to overawe them.

The federal establishment had many programs that were closely allied with the desires and aspirations of the Christian churches and reformers of the times. One result was a government policy hostile to native religions. Among other things, efforts were made to suppress sacred rites. Not surprisingly, the Ute reaction was defensive — they became more aware of their own culture and helped to preserve those rites that the government and its Christian administrators were attempting to suppress.

In 1948 the government established the United States Indian Court of Claims. The Ute claims were the first of the great land cases to be settled in that court. So valid were Ute arguments that they had been dispossessed of land rightfully theirs that the court awarded them a settlement of \$32 million about one-half of which went to the Uintah and Ouray members.

Although the money was used in some part for the betterment of the Ute people, tribesmen were often ill-prepared to spend their share of the money. Most useful to them has been that portion of the court award held in trust and administered by the tribal councils with the advice and help of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and economic experts.

But even Ute land claims reimbursement has not kept the Ute people from poverty. One result has been the proliferation of programs and projects sponsored by the federal government. Often the Indian reservations epitomize the welfare state. However, in its various guises federal aid has enabled the tribes including the Utes to move toward self-sufficiency. The effect of federal help upon tribal development is and has been profound. Most of the reorganization of the Indian tribes has been spon-

sored by the federal government. The Indian Reorganization Act, or the Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934, has been particularly important. From it has grown a form of democratic control in which tribal councils, committees, and governors have replaced the tribal organizations by which Indians traditionally conducted their affairs. Federal policy for both good and ill has been dominant in this process.

For too long we have searched the records only for the mistakes of the agents of the federal establishment, then presented American Indian history as a series of blunders and the representatives of the government as an unending list of villains. Most of the people who have worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the army, and other agencies have been men of honest intentions and good works. They represent, by and large, a far more pragmatic and humane point of view in Indian matters than the population of the nation as a whole. Policy, not personnel, was most often faulty. In the future, officials will probably be judged far less harshly than now.

Presently, very great changes are occurring. There is a strong revival of interest in Ute culture among the Indians themselves. The tribal government, in cooperation with numerous federal agencies, is rapidly transforming the reservation economically. Education is far more intensive than ever before. Most important is the rise of self-determination among the Ute people, combined with a more realistic view of Indian aspirations by the federal government and the white-dominated society. The ability of Indians to play a significant role in determining the course of their own development seems to be at hand.

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*Opposite: Hashkéneinii Biye' shown at age 83 with his son, long after the controversial killings of two white prospectors. Utah State Historical Society, Charles Kelly Collection.*